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BALLADS FROM THE ST. JO.

Adm ✓ BY
A. U. CRÜLL.

"The poet's license—'tis the fee
Of earth, and sky, and river,
For him who loves them royally,
To hold and have forever."

— J. G. SAXE.

1894.

CHARLES B. HIBBERD,

SOUTH BEND, IND.

42241-Z'

[Handwritten flourish]

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1894

TO MY MOTHER.

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Scott Bond

Bond

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THE OLD ST. JO.

O RIVER, where boy-hood longed to know
Of the larger world where you mystic went ;
What music so wild as the changing flow
Which the clouds to your bubbling eddies lent ?

O swashing stream, when the freshet pours
And the snows of winter are melted away,
When the threatening thunder cloud lowers,
And your colors turn to a dirty gray.

O hurry and roar o'er the shallowed place,
And bubble and rest where the river runs deep ;
O music of birds when the first rays erase
The morning mist from branches that weep.

O waters that crowd where the shore juts out
So rocky and tangled with wild-grape vine ;
Your wavelets and foaming go churning about,
The shadows out on you so lazy recline.

O stream, with a thousand youthful joys
Strewn along the sanded and pebbly banks ;
O laughter of rollicking, wondering boys
With such measure of villainous pranks.

FARM TIMES IN YOUTH.

FARM TIMES IN YOUTH.

SUCH rivers there are where I
Come from, and the brightest blue sky,
And the loveliest grass, and the greenest trees,
And the croaking crows, and bumble-bees,
And meadow larks, too, that flutter away
And hide in the leaves and the new-cut hay.
Oh ! isn't it wonderful fun
To watch the red squirrels run
On the fence, and the dog half crazy below,
And the boys with their faces all aglow ?
Oh ! better to live where the cherry blooms edge
As thick as the snow-flakes white, and pledge
The richest puddings and cream and pies,
Than to be in town with its smoky skies.
Oh ! happier it was to climb on the plow
Than to ride in a Pullman palace now ;
And wilder my heart beat then to hear
The Jew's-harp's rough tones drop into my ear,
Than to sit while the church choir sings,
And the tenor starts on his eagle wings,
And the bass gets down so dismal and deep,
While the young man close at your side falls asleep.
Oh ! fairer it was to trembling meet
The bonneted girls with their unshod feet ;
To carry their books, and run and laugh,
And bellow, and frighten the calf,

FARM TIMES IN YOUTH.

Than to level one's self to society's whims
And go where the giddy waltz swims.
O sunshine and meadow and lowing herd !
O flutter of swallow and humming of bird !
O dew - drops like crystals that swung in the sun !
And sun - set so golden when the day was done !
O apples and peaches and beechnuts too,
And spider - wheels spun where the ragweeds grew !
O strawberries red as the carpet flowers !
O days as short as the later hours !
O neighbors who joked me and made me blush !
O fellows who choked me and made me hush
That nonsense ! Ah ! those were times about
As rich in life as the world turns out.

SWEET MARY.

SWEET MARY.

THERE are old friends that live although
Their song is hushed, and all the glow
Of life is gone : sweet Mary she
Lives like a dream, and follows me
With that wild laugh and taunting gaze—
Her eyes were gems which song can praise
So meagerly. How fawn-like, too,
She ran and leaped the door way through
When noon hour came, and shouts so shrill
Of boys and girls swept o'er the hill.
Her voice was sweet with girlish glee,
And had such wondrous melody
Of praise when morning school-hour came,
And every body tried the same
Old tunes which still are jostled out
From childish lips that smile and pout.
But Mary's seat one April day
Was vacant : it was such awkward way
To have the day's mixed tasks begin
Unless her voice was mingled in
The music ; and there was no laugh
Upon our lips for almost half

SWEET MARY.

An hour. Some one had whispered round
How such a moaning plaint,—the sound
Of agony came through the wide
Open door where sweet she lay inside.
Her mother's kiss and touch so kind
Could not allay the fevered mind ;
The doctor with his morning smile
In such a cheery, hopeful style,
Was sure that soon our friend would grace
Her seat again ; and sudden trace
Of joy looked out from many a face.
But as the days dragged weary on
Another world began to dawn
Upon the little sufferer ;
The roses left her cheeks, and where
Had been the laughing eyes so blue
Such patient longing calm looked through ;
No murmur of reproach for this
Quick parting from youth's heaped - up bliss.

* * * * *

The horses harnessed black came out
From town, and men with arms so stout
Caught up the wreck of what had seemed
An angel in our lives. Tears streamed
The mother's cheeks in her wild woe,
And women whose lives were all aglow
Sobbed as they looked and closer pressed
Their babes so frail upon their breast.

SWEET MARY.

Oh ! “ earth to earth and dust to dust,”
That startles me in spite of trust,
Was trembling dropped from sacred tongue,
And we who looked on Death so young
Forgot the grief that had so wrung
Our hearts ; for other lives touched ours,—
And youth’s deep griefs are like spring showers.

IN SUMMER TIME.

IN SUMMER TIME.

THE locust buzzes in the trees,
And the cricket chirps and chirps at night,
And the lazy, bumming bumble - bees
On the sweetest clover light.

The wagons creak and the horses puff
And patient pull the loads of hay ;
And at times the driver swears so gruff
And frightens the children where they play.

The robin breaks the noon - tide heat
With his chirrup high on the maple twig,
And the crow moves on with steady beat,
While the bee - bird strikes a whirl - a - gig.

A moan floats over the marsh and hill,
Of the milk - maid's mooing, patient cows ;
The breezes toss and gentle fill
The tangled tree - top's leafy boughs.

The house - wife sits between the doors
And laughs as the sweetest children play ;
Then a song of hope she playfully pours
As she sets the dinner dishes away.

The turkey struts in his lordly style,
The cardinal king of the barn - yard flocks ;
The ducks jaunt off in single file,
Aloft the mischief red - head knocks.

IN SUMMER TIME.

The chickens sit with open eye
And ears all awake as the speckled hen
Clucks soft and finds as she scans the sky
That the hawk is floating up there again.

The stable doors are open wide,
And the dreamy pigeons sit and coo,
While the horses' hoofs resound inside,
And the hired - man sleeps the noon hour through.

The clouds drift away in heaps of gauze
Across the arch of the mystic dome,
And the traveler starts from his resting pause
And sighs again for his farm - house home.

The watch - dog lazy lies before
The barn where wagon and hay - rack stand,
But bounds with a wish across the floors
To catch the touch of his master's hand.

The life of the farm is sweet to me,
And the boyish passions still abide
To return each year when from books I'm free
Where my mother and sister reside.

CULLED FROM EVENING.

CULLED FROM EVENING.

YONDER where the fading glow
Of sunset sinks so soft below
The hills the bob - white used to sit
And whistle for his mate, and flit
Whene'er I tossed the wicked stone—
I stand there now, it seems, alone
And hear the wild - bird's mingled cry.
Above, the black - birds flutter by,
And softly comes the good - night coo
Of turtle doves — I feel the dew
Damp on the tender, spreading grass,
And see the wild - cranes awkward pass
Above the trees. The brook, whose praise
Is sung in Tennyson's wild lays,
Moves on between the logs and stops
Within the pools awhile, then drops
In troubled accents o'er some steep.
The early stars begin to keep
Their vigil round a tired world ;
The farmer's call to cows is hurled
Across the fields until it wakes
In yonder forest wall and takes
Its backward bound. A soothing sound
Which travels slow along the ground
Is borne upon the cooling breeze
And murmurs in the swaying trees ;

CULLED FROM EVENING.

The great trunks form a line of black,
And through its center runs a track
Of light. The wagon with its wheels
Grates harsh upon this peace, and steals
Away the quiet of the hour
With all its sense of hidden power.
Day sinks itself in gathering night ;
The last faint rays of western light
Dip soft away. The heavy cars
Roll dismally along ; the stars
Are crowding in the arch above—
The youth is wondering when his love
Will be more than a rhyme - told song.
The farmer, with his hand made strong
By toil, sinks down upon his bed
After his loved good night is said.
O days ! beyond my poor recall,
Linked to my soul with love, how small
Thy griefs ! But in life's gathering hope
Backward my memories ever slope ;
And while my faith grows firmer fixed
I'll keep the doubts with courage mixed.

AT THE BLACKSMITH'S.

AT THE BLACKSMITH'S

To - DAY I stopped at the back swung door,
And a feeling of sadness swept o'er
The scene like the one I used to love
When I was a boy, not yet above
The bare - foot tramp around the fields.
What a flood of delight remembrance yields
As I sit again and hear the roar
Of bellows, and see the iron once more,
And hear the horses stamp. I applaud
The bay with words as he stands half awed
By the black - smith's quick and steady stroke
As he pounds the nail and drives the joke.
The sparks leapt aloft as the canvas swelled,
And moaned on its lips where the hot waves welled,
And groaned while a grimy hand so strong
Pulled the lever down, and then came a song.
The memory of the past abides
As life leaps along in crimson tides.
While youth grows fainter and farther away
Still the boys are passing the place each day,
And they stop and twitter, and strain their eyes
With sights like those I saw. Surprise

AT THE BLACKSMITH'S.

Creeps into their fevered brains and breaks
In laughter and cheers, and rudely awakes
The embers that hide in the black-smith's heart
As he ply's his stroke and honors his art.
Sometimes he smiles, and again a tear
Creeps across his cheek while he stoops to hear
The boyish clamor and questioning
That touch life's harp on its delicate string.

MORE THINGS OF SUMMER.

MORE THINGS OF SUMMER.

ONCE more I sit in the shade and hear
The bumble - bee buzz and the robin squeak,
While across the road that runs so near
The wood - pecker thumps with his ivory beak.

And the breezes toss the golden grain
And bend the tops of the maple trees ;
The cows saunter slowly down the lane
And the wind - mill grinds as the currents please.

The grass flattens out where I lie and muse
And get back close to Heaven once more ;
The boy thumps out with his stogy shoes
And whistles and swings the old - barn - door.

The geese gabble round and saucily hiss,
And the guineas cluck " pa - twrack, pa - twrack ;"
The doves flutter down and murmur amiss
While the sob of the orchard floats back.

The young apples hang in clusters on high
And the leaves keep them company greenly rich ;
The boys look longing right up at the sky
Where the tree - toad croaks in his hidden niche.

Sweet scent of the meadow fills the day
And tells of clover - blooms richest red ;
The oriole swings and swings away
And into the nest pulls back her head.

MORE THINGS OF SUMMER.

My neighbor, the jolly and bare-foot man,
Lies flat on his back in the front-door yard ;
His head is lowered as far as it can,
And his slumbers the dog's eyes guard.

The punkins are big almost as my fist,
And the vines are reaching all ways about ;
While the melons begin to insist
For room, and the corn-stalks get more stout.

The potato-bugs climb up in the sun
And sit as still as a practised shirk ;
They eat and eat until they are done
Or till the Paris-green does its work.

BOY LIFE.

BOY LIFE.

JUST to get a new and dainty fit
Of clothes, and to catch the biggest chub,
To astonish the boys with a little bit
Of dexterous leaping across the fence,
Without once touching your hands: to commence
To make the hide on your fore-head rub.

To stand at the head of the spelling class,
And knock the ball so hard, till it flies
As high as the maple trees; to gas
With the man who runs the heavy machine
And keeps it Oh! so nice and clean,
And eats with his knife the freshest pies.

And then it's a hero who can ride
The iron-gray horses that champ the steel,
Who can sit astride or on one side—
High honor it is to drive the team
And help the women churn the cream
With the churn that turns by an iron wheel.

And it enlarges the mimic's head
To be requested to write his name
In copy-books, with a pencil red;
And there is a thrill of pride and stir
Of power when his neighbor calls him "sir"—
To be forgotten is the palm of shame.

BOY LIFE.

When the school - mam smiles he colors quick,
When the girls choose him he feels a thrill
Of joy shoot into his heart, and thick
Is his ready tongue for a little while ;
And he is in his highest style
When he says a piece, and the crowd is still.

But Oh ! he hears of the city and longs
To see the towers that loom so high
Aloft ; and he sings his sister old songs,
And runs on errands to the neighbor folks ;
But he eats green apples and nearly chokes
As he lolls beneath the big blue sky.

THE BUBBLING BAUGO.

THE BUBBLING BAUGO.

ACROSS the corn - field, past the trees
The Baugo runs ; in galaxies
Of waves he crowds among the shrubs
That line his track ; he maddened rubs
The banks of clay that shining turn
And crook and meet the waters stern.
He darts below J. Stickle's barn
And spins away among the yarn
Of calamus that mats the clay ;
And here the shiners dart away
As boys toss in the baited hook,
And anxious, free from spelling book,
They see the cork go bobbing down.
Their faces catch the darkest brown
In spite of straw - hats with broad brim.
The swallows flit and float and skim
So close beside the water's edge.
Far out upon the rocky ledge
The turtle sits and winks and fries
His back against the sun, nor tries
His skill at leaping, but creeps in

THE BUBBLING BAUGO.

And dives whene'er you just begin
To crawl upon him where he stays.
Across the brook where cattle graze
The fish - hawk screeches, seated on
The limb from which the leaves are gone ;
His murmur has a long - drawn cry
Of woe for me when dog - days dry
The brooks, and when the open sky
Keeps on its garb of steady blue,
And the mosquitoes half eat you.
The king - fisher skims, and bold
Darts by, and angered tries to scold ;
He dips his breast in the whirling pool,
Nor does he fly by any rule
Of measurement, but probes his beak
Into the stream, then goes to seek
The hollow in the bank below
The great oak tree, which late will throw
The acorns in the waves and moan
Beneath the moon when autumn's own
Career has stripped the trembling twigs
Of all their leaves, and frost - fall digs
The greenness from belated corn.
O stream ! where appetite was born
In me for song of birds and bees ;
Where panting on the matted leas
I tossed myself and wondered what
On earth could be a happier lot

THE BUBBLING BAUGO.

Than mine, with all the wealth of love
Which parents gave. The softening glove
Of city scenes not yet had cooled
My boy - hood loves, nor yet had ruled
The fashion of my coats and shoes—
So fast and strange life's current strews
The early hopes, and sweeps us on
The way where higher faith must dawn.

THE PLACE TO BE A BOY.

THE PLACE TO BE A BOY.

ALL right, I confess, to live in town
Where the houses loom up so high,
And steeples of churches look down
As you pass where the street - cars fly.

It is good, I admit, to get the news
As it fills the papers and helps you wait ;
To wear clean breeches and well - blacked shoes,
And to hear the statesmen orate.

These are fine, but by far the best
And sweetest of life for boys,
Is to live where the wild birds nest
And to taste the country's unmixed joys;

To climb the hickory trees for nuts,
And to shake the butternuts on the ground ;
To hold to the seat while the wicked ruts
Make the wagon creak and crazy bound :

To hunt the rabbit and wily fox,
And leap across the brooks and the logs ;
To ride the horses and drive the ox,
And to watch the wiggling polly - wogs :

To know where the ivy twines
And the reddest June - berries grow ;
To mix your feet with the melon vines,
And to scent the blossoms before they go.

THE PLACE TO BE A BOY.

Oh ! give me the fresh, pure breath
Of the country, without a street
In sight ; where you can watch the death
Of the year and be the first to greet

The May - apples when they sprout
And push the leaves as they cautious come ;
And I like the croak of the frogs about
The time when the pheasants drum.

And the tasks on the farm which they give
To the boy, make him walk with the sheep and pig ;
And he trusts himself and learns to live
While his muscles and lungs grow big.

The horses that trot are better to ride
Than electric cars that spin
And shake and bounce ; and too, inside
They charge you five cents to begin.

More goodness sinks into the soul,
More courage gets into the brain
Where the sun - light streams, and the roll
Of Nature sweeps on in her strain.

GEORGE CAUGHT IN THE MESHES.

GEORGE CAUGHT IN THE MESHES.

ACROSS my lady's face there runs
A smile which I can't help adore ;
The larger chase the little ones
And then they all run back once more.
Her lips are curved so fine, and tipped
With rosy red ; and too, a kiss
Is there. One time I slyly slipped
And stole a few, which she don't miss.

I never yet have penned a rhyme
To celebrate my lady's worth,
For when I try to, every time
They mix too much with things of earth.
I can't make purest things more pure
Nor add new beauty to the rose :
Paper and pen I am quite sure
Will fail to even half disclose.

Something is prisoned in my vest—
I wonder if the same will be
When I am older and the best
Of life eterne is gone from me ?
The sweetest smiles that oftentimes live
On lady lips, or e'en a laugh
Like giant's roar, could never give
My secret all away, nor half.

GEORGE CAUGHT IN THE MESHES.

Far stretched the prairies lie between,
And miles of forest bar my eyes
From sight of hers. The hills were green
When last we parted, and the skies
Were smoky all around the edge ;
The black - bird beat his random way,
And sparrows fluttered in the hedge—
How sweet it would have been to stay!

I will not vex myself with doubt
To know if these pure joys can last ;
Not now shall they be put to rout
By sterner things—I'll hold them fast.
Life is so strangely, deftly spun
With mingling of the false and true,
When once a joy unmixed I've won
Oh ! let me live it slowly through.

Let Byron rage and strike his chain,
Let cynics hug their wretched choice ;
Let me strike up a little strain
To suit my lady's trembling voice.
I'll seek the rose and not the thorn,
And when the roses cease to grow
And bloom I'll hasten to adorn
With other flowers—I hate old woe !

INDICATIONS.

INDICATIONS.

GEORGE left me just a little while ago :
I asked him what was on again—you know
That we are confidential friends, and they
Are rather scarce along the world's high - way.
But to-night my friend was silent, and the dart
Of humor in his eye shut out my heart ;
But then it is plain that when I once confess
That secrecy is mean—Yes, wretchedness—
The boy will let me see what is inside
His own heart's core ; I never yet defied
Him when he challenged me to let him see
My deepest plot of love and secrecy.
And friendship is a jealous, fleeing thing,
Nor will it stay where light doubts bring
Suspicion ever so small : the heart must be
As frank as morning sunrise and as free
As holy Christian's love for Him who fain
Would humanly have missed dark Calvary's pain.
But now the meaning of his eye I know—
Soft ! listen while the moon is dipping low
Into the lurid West ; the soft tones flow
Along the street ; the crisp and midnight air
Is freighted with a song—almost a prayer.
It is the lover's strain, sweet serenade,
And I am anxious, too, yes half afraid

INDICATIONS.

Lest she who sleeps in yonder darkened room
May only dream that in the night's deep gloom
A hero came and called in sobbing tone—
But no, for they who worship from the throne
Which love lifts up, not slowly recognize
The voice which all through waking hours they prize.
And now the song is gone, and with it, too,
A youthful hope and fervor larger grew :
Soft hands are used to send a girl's reply,
And with the plauding George again will try.
O these are little Juliet and Romeo !
It is the wide world's way : this overflow
Of youthful bliss will never, never cease,
Though lover's vows are broken and increase
Of anguish comes with gathering years. How plain
Why George would only smile ! he won't refrain
From pouring out his secret now, and we
Will laugh and celebrate right royally.

GEORGE'S PRAYER.

GEORGE'S PRAYER.

KIND FATHER, what hast thou not done
To help the quickening pulses run
With ecstasy ! What world could be
More crowned with love than this I see
About me ? Such childish laughs and pranks
Are every where : no later clanks
Of fear oppressed love they feel,
But every moment starts a peal
Of joy from off red lips ; the tear
That transient griefs press out, is near
Upon a smile, which latent lies
And breaks before the sorrow dies.
All this I lived one time, and yet
There linger memories I can't forget,
Of youth's own bliss of things possessed.
Dear Lord, have not I been caressed
By mother hands ? have not lips pressed
To mine her fondest tear - wet kiss ?
Nor do I now once daily miss
Her prayer for me, and when I take
Long leave of her there is such ache
In this full heart—could thy great thought
Spare her least pain ; may never aught
Of all I do rob her of sleep
Or make the furrows sink more deep

GEORGE'S PRAYER.

Upon her cheek. My brothers are
Grown men, but every little jar
To us hurts those hard wrung heart strings
Which loved us through the darkest things.
O Christ and God ! Thou hast returned
The blossoms to the trees and earned
Such love from me ! I saddened yearned
To see the meadow with its dress
Come noiseless back, that I might press
My heart upon the mother fair,
Who with anemones set there
And pansies sweet, outruns my prayer.
And this deep frightened breath
Swept out the wood, has banished death
From every hill ; the swaying pine
Is lost among the greener twine
Of vines and tossing, fluttering flags
Of foliage ; the little crags
Of greenness spread across the hill
Tempt me to stop. O God, I will
Not ask for garlands better twined
Than these whereon I fall, inclined
To sleep and dream. But O ! I would
The little girls in alleys could
Breathe here the breath which tosses white
The blossoms where I try to write.
And if there were more loved in all
The hearts that crowd to see the fall

GEORGE'S PRAYER.

Of ashes on some fevered face
Which lets this world of beauty go
And meets the things almost we know !
O, Christ ! shall I profane these lips
To ask thee for great things—high place
Where manhood stoops and sullied slips ?
Couldst Thou, O holy, holy One,
Let all my heart's outgoings run
With keener zest, to those who sit
In darkness ? in whose face is writ
The blush of shame ? And if it may
Be so, help us to find the way
To call the deadened virtue back
To some dark - dealing soul. Unpack
The selfishness which sits enthroned
In hearts of those who Christ have owned
Upon their lips, but never yet
Have eager tried to soothing let
The good deed find its patient way
Where sorrow sits and scarce can pray.
Father, befriend, O not forsake
The ones unloved who maddened wake
And scorn the sun - beams as they find
The shadows in the filthy mind.
And there are still forgotten things
For which my heart so riven sings,—
Loved ones on whom the curtain swings
Of poverty, and cruel brings

GEORGE'S PRAYER.

The sleepless night of dread unrest.
Need this be so? Thou knowest best
Which way all dutys should be learned,
And how the common problem burned
Into life's core. Be blessings on
Me when the blithesome days are gone,
Be my first love as pure and calm
As when I earliest drank the balm
Of kisses off the willing lips.
And mid all pain, through awkward slips
Of life, may every effort lift
Some one and make the shadows drift.

GEORGE AWAY ! BUT SOON TO RETURN.

GEORGE AWAY ! BUT SOON TO RETURN.

THE leaves are falling and softly float
The laughter and ripple of waters, and in
The night - time from the cuckoo's throat
The wierd notes come ; and now begin
To gather the frogs along the stream,
And the marsh is dark and still,
While the early fire - flies gleam
Down below the silent mill.

In this calm hour Clotilde
Sits twining the tendrils and leaves
Which her lap have carelessly filled ;
And in her heart she silent grieves
That I must away on the morrow's sunrise
To the land where the cypress swings,
And the summer never dies,
And no winter - wind sings.

Good night ! and farewell, O love,
Until my errand is done ;
With thee in my heart and God above,
My labor will lightly be won
And letters I'll send and flowers
Plucked off from the orange trees,
To hurry the days and the hours
Till again I kiss thy lips with these.

GEORGE'S REMEMBRANCE.

GEORGE'S REMEMBRANCE.

BUT O! for a pen that rightly might tell
The secret I keep and save it so well,
Of the love whose presence is ever near,
Though the winter chills and the storm beats drear;
And the times when we pressed the daisies sweet
And crowded the sand down under our feet ;
Of the things that we knew yet did not say
As the stars turned round the arched way.
Dear sunshine and shadow were all forgot ;
The tremble of trees in the garden lot
We saw, but the love that we worshiping knew,
As pure as the dawn, as chaste as the dew,
Filled full our hearts and calmly shut out
The world that mixed - up was scattered about.

GEORGE'S ELEGY FOR KARL ARDENT.

GEORGE'S ELEGY FOR KARL ARDENT.

O PRIEST, your words are dark with pain ;
You try to tell me what his share
Of bliss ; but you forget the gain
That I had in his face so fair.
So many times we met and vied
In friendly feats of earnest thought—
I'm sure no ill can him betide,
But such sincerity he brought.

His picture hangs above my chair,
Those eyes so steady scan my face,
And in that deep, courageous air
I see the type of manly grace.
No trace of cowardice is here,
No sign of choice for sensuous sin—
My friend ! his love I had sincere,
No maiden had essayed to win.

Where is he now ? not long ago
He gave me entrance to his heart ;
My face is wet with streaming woe,
My life has sore been torn apart.
His sister does not moan, but I
Can scarce be reconciled to fate—
These tears would cease did I but try,
But griefs would fast accumulate.

GEORGE'S ELEGY FOR KARL ARDENT.

Oh ! life has so much lack of joy,
And those in whom our trust is fixed
Are ah ! so few : he kept the boy
So sweetly with his manhood mixed.
When sorrow dropped upon my hope
He had such words of kind appeal
That I could see the future slope
Into the light. Almost I feel

The pressure of that firm right hand
Upon my arm even as I write—
How soldiery he used to stand
And chafe me for my sighs ! he might
Have stayed below and blessed me still
As life runs swiftly to its end ;
It was his constant aim to fill
My joys—beneath this woe I bend.

Shall I wear emblems of my grief
To let the world know why my face
Is sad ? could this bring least relief,
And would it help to live and chase
The shadows from my daily task ?
I know what he would have me do—
Those lips are ready now to ask,
“ Do you intend to live less true ? ”

GEORGE'S ELEGY FOR KARL ARDENT.

Were it not best to stand erect,
Whatever good or ill befall?
How well just now I recollect
His morning greeting and call
To follow when we heard the cry
Of pain sweep down the burning street,—
He did not hesitate to die
'To make some other life more sweet?

How beautiful it is that such
As he are vouchsafed to the world!
Around us moves and lingers much
So lowly vile: men's souls are curled
Within coarse mantles—weak as grass,
They imitate and ape the throng
And link themselves close to the class
Who do not feel another's wrong.

But this bold pioneer of mine
Had shut his teeth, compressed his lips,
And vowed that he would not resign
Himself to empty gain; the whips
Which swing in Custom's coward hand
He scorned as only valiant heroes can,—
His life was calm, the day's command
He kept, and stood a noble man.

GEORGE'S ELEGY FOR KARL ARDENT.

Ah ! his was the frankest heart :
He never quailed nor fear could know,
And never tried the shameless art
Which cowards train to meet a foe ;
But like the cloudless sun at dawn—
His face bespoke the hidden thought,
And crystal clear the voice now gone
His soul's expression sweetly wrought.

Where is he now ? Oh ! Faith, I see
The gold tints on the sun-set sky :
Those beauties ! have they small degree
Of lights which meet his sainted eye ?
What could I wish for him—a rest
Where pain and labor find release ?
No ! no ! for him it seemed the best
To see the tasks begun, increase.

Who is it longs for rest ? not souls
Like his ; and where his spirit dwell,
I know his throbbing brain patrols
The wronged. And now, O Karl, farewell !
Had it been mine to make the choice,
I would have chained thee to this heart ;
But I submit : henceforth thy voice,
Though gone, new courage shall impart.

GEORGE'S CELESTINE.

GEORGE'S CELESTINE.

TO-DAY I looked into the past—
It is a picture sad and vast ;
Crime and intrigue are everywhere,
Men lose themselves and lightly err
To win renown ; soldiers are lost
In bliss to see their brothers tossed
Upon the earth, and scarcely ask
How hearts will wring with woe ; they bask
In smile of emperor whose least salute
Quick wins the wavering recruit.
I am not faint to know that through
The years men rushed to arms and drew
Heart blood without a tear or sigh :
Mayhap because men dared to die
Ourselves and loved are named the free,
And breathe the air of liberty.
But, O Celeste, thy beaming face
And open heart and woman's grace,
Are more to me than all the fame
That lives about heroic name.
Oh sweet ! to know that every hour,
Afar or near, love's magic power
Abides, and thy dear heart is true
To our first pledge ; the mystic blue
Of thy fair-speaking, modest eyes
Is part of all I see ; surprise

GEORGE'S CELESTINE.

Of song that came and went, as soft
You touched the keys, and trilled the oft
Repeated notes, lives on and gains
In melody as other strains
I hear. Celeste, thy voice was low
When evening shadows fell ; the glow
Of sunset kissed the hills, and tears
Were on my cheeks ; unbidden fears
Crowded themselves into my heart
When it was ours to kiss and part ;
But each day's toil is firmer writ
In earnestness to make it fit
Approval for thy coming smile,
When I shall clasp thy hand, and style
Thee queen of all that life may hold ;
And were my honors thousand-fold
As rich as ever came to gifted men,
I'll live the old joy oft again,
Which thrilled me through, sublimely blessed
When your full heart its love confessed.

GEORGE'S FRIEND IN TROUBLE.

GEORGE'S FRIEND IN TROUBLE.

Two eyes he saw, and after that
He forgot where he was, and slipped his hat
On backward, and felt a thrill
Of trembling get into his will.
And he went from the church all awake
With something that made his big heart ache
To see that face again and to rest
His eyes unknown upon the crest
Of her hat ; and then a little more bold
He felt somewhat like the lovers of old
That his time had come. Asleep that night
He dreamed as usual ; he blew out the light
But saw in the darkness cold and deep
The lips of red and the graceful sweep
Of her head, and the chastest smile
And dimples that played and stayed awhile,
Then changed to new places in her cheeks.
The hours after that stretched out into weeks,
And his appetite grew slowly faint
And in his slumbers there came the taint
Of hope or despair : the rest of the fair
Ones had grown strangely poor and bare

GEORGE'S FRIEND IN TROUBLE.

Of beauty for him. And Oh ! this boy,
My friend, so big and strong, like a toy
On the ocean was tossed about
With love : and he who had been so stout
And had laughed at danger and darkness, grew weak
And timid, and fearful, and afraid to seek
What most he prized. I said “ Now, go
Win the girl like the man you are, and show
What mettle is in your nerve and blood ”—
To-night the news came like a thud
Of surprise ; for J. E. in the spring will marry
And change the —— but not the Carrie.

LONGING.

LONGING.

GEORGE is guessing what will be
The morrow weather, and if we
Can set our light canoe askim
On the river's eddying brim ;
Wondering if the rain will pelt
Round the water's edge where dwelt
The droves of ducks we slyly slipped
Upon, as noiselessly the oars we dipped.
And we figure when the flowers
Will follow fast the warming showers,
And the lilacs soft awake
Such odors in the wind to shake ;
When the grass will spread as soft
As our boyhood pillows in the loft,
And the north wind will forget
For a season short to fret
The maple trees that sigh and swing
Like a war-encumbered king.
We wonder if the well-sown field
Will for the farmer plenteous yield,
And if the mortgage hanging o'er
The home can be released before
It falls. George asks me when perhaps
We can take a calm relapse

LONGING

Out in the sunlight as it steals
Across the hills amid the peals
Of tree-top swinging bird and hum
Of morning things : the distant drum
Of pheasants in the tangled wood
And hen-hawk's cry of hardihood.
And sometimes, too, we whisper low
About the future and the slow
Approach of Fortune—skittish dame—
Who in our youthful fancy came
With palaces of art and sweet
Release from toil, where weary feet
And tired hands might rest and greet
Our sisters and our brothers who
Had been less happy, and slow grew
In wealth and fame. And then we fret
For swift return to her who let
Us go with tear-dimmed eye and breath
That murmured some of fear lest death
Should steal away maternal bliss
Which comes when falls our greeting kiss.
And O, we muse about the day
When love shall come to us and stay
No more to shy and live in books
Alone : we question with what looks
The spell will come to him and me—
In loveliest, fairest modesty,
Or taunting, dangerous coquetry.

LONGING

Will it be eyes of flashing dark
And cheek of marble with the mark
Of pink ? or will the eyes unseen
Be heaven's own blue ? and lips between
Which pearls of whiteness gently show,
While all the time they carry glow
Of reddest red ? and when we meet
With sadness and a strange retreat
Of joy we find in prose or song,
We wonder O, how far, how long
Must be the way until new laugh
Can be evoked, and lost the half
Of all the heavy load that's flung
Into life's scales so strangely swung.
And many times there comes the guess
When hearts will meet in tenderness
To see the prodigal out-cast
Find pity in men's love at last ;
When worships of the rich shall be
A thing of only memory,
A shadow in the past so filled
With wrong, which sweetest sweetness killed.
And O, we count the little span
Allotted to the full-lived man,
And see the days spin off so swift
Into the realms where shadows drift ;
And then we long for courage strong
To help the right, make fail the wrong,

LONGING.

To bring the day long shut from earth,
To haste the time of that new birth
Of man which shall bring in the reign
Of love without such bitter stain
Of self. And we look far across
The stream, and see a gain in loss
Of parting at the place called death—
And catch new hope with every breath.

GEORGE'S LADY.

GEORGE'S LADY.

AND she is fair as the early rose,
As pure as the breath of the morning that blows
From the hill where the mated flowers droop
In sweetness, and the whitest lilies group.
Oh ! she is lovely as the morn
With its clusters of clouds upborne ;
As the day when the shower has sudden left
The sun-light look through the clouds, bereft
Of the echoing thunder crash
And the livid lightning's maddened flash.
Oh ! she is whiter in soul than the flake
Which eddys and sinks in the hidden brake
Of the forest trees ; and her lips are still
Unkissed by another ; her calm eyes fill
With joy when my hand in hers is placed.
And her life is as beauteous and chaste
As the rain-drop which circles and sinks
In the sunlight ; as the bell which clinks
From afar as the timid herd climbs over
The hills all wrapped in their mantle of clover.
Oh ! she is as frank as the early star
When the skies of curtains all spotless are ;

GEORGE'S LADY.

As the maiden who trusting loves
Her brother ; as sweet is she as the doves
That cooing sit quiet and soften their voice
Oh ! she is my love and I am her choice—
Unworthy, too, of her gifted trust ;
And the harshness all the notes encrust
When I offer a song in the dead
Of night as she sleeps in her snow-white bed
Above me where I lie in the pallid light
Of the moon, and around is the veil of night.

TO A LITTLE GIRL.

TO A LITTLE GIRL.

SUCH eyes ! jet black, and too,
They sparkle and thrill me through.
Your apron is tied as neat as the rose
Fits into its place—such bows
Only mothers can make.
See here, little one, don't shake
Your head so harshly nor cough,
For the dimples might fall off.
Your playthings are there on the sod,
Left careless to answer a nod
Of greeting that came from the man
Who brings the berries and keeps the can
Of milk in the cart, in front
Of his feet, and drives the pigs that grunt,
And whistles the dogs that hunt.
Your blooming, bonnetted face
Bears not the first little trace
Of shame or grief, and the tears
That gather for a few short years
To come, will be light as the dew—
So quick to depart and so to renew !
And the silvery tones of your tongue
Like wood-bird notes, are flung
With laughter's own careless pearls,
Which sweetly jostle the curls

TO A LITTLE GIRL.

About your ears. In the distant land
The Master's gentle command
To his followers by the sea
Was the wish that they might be
Like the children who came to him.
Faces grow long and grim
As the years crowd on and sweep
With remorseless steps, and deep
The voice gets, and carries a tone
Of business. But I am prone
Almost to wish that your
Sweet self as you are might endure.
O what would you like the best?
Your playthings lose sudden the zest
Of daily pleasure for you :
You need a toy or dolly that's new.
Sweet one ! it pleases me so
To steal a kiss ; and you don't know
How much is the trouble your mother takes
To butter your bread and cool off the cakes,
To smooth down the pillow and curl your hair,
And fix in your heart a little prayer.
But we'll not vex us now and wonder
What is to be, but ever soft under
My vest remembrance of best kiss
I'll keep—You are too perfect for this
Crooked rhyme : and now we must say good-by :
Be just a girl and don't you dare cry.

LIFE'S MIXTURE.

LIFE'S MIXTURE.

UNSUNG men die ! but this has naught
Of pain for me : such tears bedew
My heart to see men still untaught
In deeds of love and mercy too.

Dear little children moan and press
Thin lips to mother's sadly marred
With shame, made sadder with distress :
And love's fair gates are harshly jarred.

The wheels of commerce grind and crush
Fair childhood still in tenderest bloom,
And over song they bring a hush,
And into love a murderous gloom.

Oh ! wealth of gold is empty spite
Of drapery and jewels rare :
Hearts are the home, and lives delight
Where passion pure outrivals care.

Such blighted lives in prisons droop
And quiver at the faint recall
Of her who smiling used to stoop
And coo and let the kisses fall.

The summer creeps into the year
And brings the spring and flowers back,
But cannot wake my loved so dear
Who sleep beside the wagon track.

LIFE'S MIXTURE.

Nor does it heal the wounded hearts
So foully seared with careless wrong ;
It needs love's rarest art of arts
To fill the soul with sweetest song.

The year is steeped with wild delight,
And autumn crowns it round with gold ;
But sorrow's links the chain unite—
Not half life's pain was ever told.

O heart ! it is not fortune's thrust
Of bitterness at thee I note ;
But those I love life's woes encrust,
And stop the music in my throat.

But joy will come to them and I
Will seal the sadness ere it slips
And sets the tear drop in my eye
And burns upon these fevered lips.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

THE smile of the girls and the jolly joke
Of the boys as we meet and give and take
Keen thrusts of humor, and gently poke
A pun to set the laughter awake.

There is a sweetness in the strain
Of music that comes from the new church choir :
As they sing the old tunes with soft refrain
I feel myself borne higher and higher.

And there is such joy in the dear sunrise
As it mounts the towering steeples and hills,
Streaks away on the scattered clouds and the skies,
And awakes again the whistles and mills.

And, too, it is so good to work
All the day and scarcely note as flies
The time fast away, and never shirk
A duty till slumber bedews the eyes.

Oh pleasant ! to watch the moon and the stars
As they scatter across the blue, .
While below me hurry the passenger cars
And carry their precious freight safely through.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Oh blessing ! to meet the ones who held
To me fast when life was dark and cold,
When through the sadness, so hardly quelled,
Small hope of success was left to hold.

High treasure of life ! to live for those
Who silently sorrow and anxious wait
For the good time to come when the beaten foes
Of high effort their warfare abate.

And, then, to know that true deed and word
Of kindness forever endure and win
New beauty wherever they are seen and heard,
From the moment they first begin.

THE BEST IN THE WORLD!

THE BEST IN THE WORLD!

A SONG to-night, boys? Alas! I would
That I had music in my soul—Homer could
If he were here. Suppose I try a toast?
“Our sweethearts?” you know that pleases most
Young fellows anytime, by day or night;
But then you see I’m older and not quite
So like to wander off on things like that—
Don’t leave us, Jim; some one pull off his hat.
Jim met with a misfortune late, ’tis said.
Talk “sweet-heart” to him, he gets as rich, ripe red
As cranberries when they are nicely cooked.
And it’s whispered round that Charley hooked
His girl from him down at the dance—
The boy! he’s got an uncle and two aunts
With lots of money; they keep him trim,
And the sweetest girl in town will smile on him.
But to-night there is a fairer one for me—
You don’t believe it? Wait. Do you see
That letter over there? my pen is wet,
The ink is dripping from it yet;
Inside of that is the story of my love:
A pretty theme? Ah! yes, it is, but above

THE BEST IN THE WORLD !

The common songs that line our books—
I see a face ! how sweet and pure it looks !
There is no error here ; fortune may never smile,
Or if she come and fail, I know the while
This love is fixed as yonder northern star ;
And if I linger near or wander far,
Wide open arms, caresses chaste, as sweet
As angel smile are hidden there to greet,
Oh ! those hands have cooled my fevered brow—
How vividly I see the tears (you must allow
Me time to be myself again) I felt
A thickening in my throat ; 'twill quickly melt
As other memories come streaming on :
Of patient toil, blest deeds of love ; at dawn
The day was ushered in by tenderest cares ;
Sweet songs of cheer and oft-unuttered prayers ;
And as the sun crept up his circled steep
All worn with play safe-guarded I could sleep.
It was her love tones, too, when shadows came
Could put such sweetness in my rugged name ;
And how it spurred my hope to know that she,
In faith that never shook, could urge a plea
Before the throne that guards the sparrow's fall.
The world's mishaps might come, and through it all
I saw a toil-worn hand held out to me
Which chained and yet could always set me free.
Yes ; talk about your sweethearts,—their eyes
Struck from the blue that rims these northern skies ;

THE BEST IN THE WORLD !

Or, if perchance, you rather have them jet,
Who knows whether they look upon another, wet
With weeping ? And, too, the arts which they essay
May charm somebody else when you're away.
I've plucked the fairest lily on the lake—
Send yours wherever you will, I vow to take
This one, and with a kiss and accent low
I'll crown the queen of womankind below ;
And do you guess whose is such nameless worth ?
It is my mother ! the sweetest name on earth.

FAREWELL !

FAREWELL !

No revelry to-night
While we sit, and talk, and tell
Of the times when our hearts were light
And no darkening shadows fell.

The books are tossed away,
While we turn the theme that suits
Us best : the things of to-day,
And hap'ly no one confutes.

Who dare disturb as we sit,
And hurl wild jokes, and guess
Whom Cupid, the wily, will hit
The first and so sore distress ?

I go to-morrow to seek
The southern sky where flowers
Are mixed with the fruit, and the freak
Of frost never stops the showers.

Who will live the best of us boys ?
Who will keep these memories sweet ?
Who will guard while the world employs
Its arts to entangle his feet ?

Good by, now Karl and Jim,
Till we meet with the gathered news—
And Homer, we all love him,
And wait for the tread of his shoes.

FAREWELL !

No cup dripping down with wine
Do we lift to our laughing lips ;
Our mothers like us to incline
Away from the tempting sips.

Our sweet-hearts wherever they be
We long for and then suppress
The secrets which trouble us three
While our hand-grips tight we press.

Adieu ! and ever keep
From shame, and hoping go
That while the seasons sweep
Our love may live aglow.

THE DARK SIDE.

THE DARK SIDE.

FATHER of light, thy children weep
To-night in palace, hut and hall :
Wherever stars their vigil keep
The bitter tear-drops fall.

Some hearts are seared with wildest pain,
Some child is faint and sad alone ;
And in the sunshine falls the rain
The cypress swings and starts the moan.

The tangled webs of life swift spin
Away, and cheeks grow strangely pale ;
In place of purity the tracks of sin
Are marked, and strong hearts quail.

Oh ! power for good is madly turned
From what it needed, might have done ;
Love's path-way, too, is coldly spurned
And filthy wishes foul begun.

Sits everywhere the widowed one.
Her children swept away so far ;
And when the day's small tasks are done
Her prayer goes after where they are.

Talent and worth are nameless crushed,
And hope droops down her head ;
The sweetest song mayhap is hushed
By poverty which weighs like lead.

THE BRIGHT SIDE.

THE BRIGHT SIDE.

TO-NIGHT around the hearth fires sit
United hearts, and in the glow
From off the flames which shining flit.
Sweet conversations ebb and flow.

Joy beams from the eyes that I chance to meet,
And happiness everywhere looks and lurks ;
While childish, pattering, unshod feet
Are beating the sand like little Turks.

The lip of the mourner sighing, stills
The pain as it climbs from the heart below ;
Across the meadow and over the hills
Are coming the songs I used to know.

The babies are cooing, and parent joy
Is drunk with the speech of one-year-olds ;
Young hands are tossing the latest toy,
And an arm the wayward son enfolds.

The lover is calm in the promise true
Which his sweet-heart trusting gives ;
Old age is hoping again to renew
Its youth in the land which all time lives.

THE BRIGHT SIDE.

Strong freemen are proud in spite
Of poverty which grips them fast,
While they court and do not shun the fight,
And win the needed joys at last.

And love is reaching out apace
To succor the souls whose lives are dark,
And sweetness is gathering in the face
Where scowling had furrowed deep its mark.

A CHRISTIAN'S THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

A CHRISTIAN'S THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

Dear Lord, what prayer now shall I give?
"It is so beautiful to live ;"
And thou art O, so far away—
Can this be true? Thy word does say
That as days come and quickly end,
Forever thou dost near attend.
Shall I thank thee in heart because
No pain I bore, and rich applause
Was mine? Is it for joy we stay
Within this tenement of clay?
Oh Christ! thy steps across the plain
Were dogged, but thou didst not complain;
Shall I then dare to inward plead
That joy unstinted be my meed?
The poet's heart, sore, crushed with pain,
Has sung its sweetest, softest strain,
And men who dropped time's golden sand
Unused away, grow nobly grand
Because some grief upon them sent
Awoke to life the deep intent.
Did rosy lips turn lily-white
And death sink all my day in night?
Mayhap it was thine own right hand
Dropped down to save a burning brand.

A CHRISTIAN'S THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

Shall I thank thee for gain alone,
Because my hopes have wildly grown
By some unheralded success?
Or shall I join the throng and bless
Thee for the providential dart
Which pierced me through, laid bare my heart?
Father, for gain and loss I owe
Thee song and prayer: how can I know
With these dim-sighted, human eyes?
Grief may be good in dark disguise.

NEW YEAR LINES.

NEW YEAR LINES.

O LIFE so sweet ! with joy so filled !
And O so brief ! The sunset tints
Across the hills now gently gild
The clouds ; down drop the darkness' hints.

The vesper bell rings wildly loud
And beckons me to look within ;
Who has been false and vilely proud
Come now and claim relief from sin.

Father of all, to-night the year
With its great freight of love and crime
Must wrap the shroud mid winds so bleary
And sink into the tomb of time.

We would not weep this hour unless
The fainting heart and careless lip
Have missed a chance to love and bless,
And so have let some good deed slip.

A LETTER I LOVE.

A LETTER I LOVE.

THREE letters to-night ; and the best
Has come all the way from the West,
Where the sunsets dip low in the sea,
And the Chinaman, sir Hop Lee,
Wears his cue and laundries the shirts,
Where the red-wood tree so stately skirts
The hills. There the goat and the wild-sheep play,
And the hunter beats the brush all day.
O summer is there the long, long year
While the frost and the snow are vexing here ;
And the purple grapes cluster and cling
In the leaves while the girls laugh and sing
And taunt the boys with a dearth of smiles,
While into their hearts come the aching wiles
And wishes and hopes that sometime yet
One manly and strong and brave will set
Their love all aflame ; and their wishes lend
A beauty to all they do, and send
The red to their cheeks. But here where I
Am threading my life's task through, the sky
Is sullen sometimes and the breezes blow
Their freight of ice, and the flakes of snow
Toss about and catch in the curls that deck
The school-girl's eyes and ringlet her neck.
Here the woods are bare, and the songs of the wind
Are mixed with moaning, and sad rescind

A LETTER I LOVE.

The joy that comes with the crowding night
As the sun-set sinks in colors so bright.
But summer is at my side, though thin
Ice covers the marsh, and the skates begin
To rest again : the seasons are in
The heart and the brain, I guess,
Whatever be the wide world's dress.

TRIBUTE.

TRIBUTE.

O BROTHERS ! who sleep in the camping ground
Of the land which no drum-beat ever hears,
Oh ! green be the grass which mantles the mound
Unwatered by kindred's bedewing tears.

O nameless ! wherever your couch is spread,
Where the cypress swings and the stars look through,
And the hills lift above your voiceless bed,
Our loves still follow and cling to you.

O comrades ! now numbered with the roll which grows
As the days dissolve in the longer span,
May flowers as pure as the drifting snows
Be scattered as only our sisters can.

O veterans ! who linger and faint on the shore
Of the stream that leads out to the uncrossed sea
When the bark floats away, but comes back no more—
What laurels shall we twine this day for thee !

O God of our fathers ! thou gavest to keep
Such valleys and mountains, such wandering streams—
The gem of the ages, with issues so deep,
Fulfillment and more of prophet's wild dreams.

O people ! whose banner with new-rising stars
Floats the wave and matches in meaning the best,
Who fails in devotion, thy purity mars,
And has lost the pearlest of patriot zest.

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

THY passion may not be as deep
As Burns', but 'tis so sweet
In artless song: thy measures sweep
In cadences along; the street
Of crowded city does not win
Applause the most from thee,
But everywhere is written in
The rural life unmixed and free.

Why does the strong man bend and strain
To catch the story as it showers
Upon his heart? and children fain
Would bring their sweetest flowers!
Life is a simple, tragic thing:
Its joys drop wildly down, and then
They start away on sudden wing,
But poets bring them back again.

Who lives the best? Is he that sings
The songs of woe and death and crime—
The tragic fate of haughty kings—
The prophet of the coming time?
Or is it they who lift to light
Unnumbered sweets that waiting lie
Long hidden and forgotten quite
With those who live and love and die?

LET'S BE HAPPY.

LET'S BE HAPPY.

SOMETIMES a smile is on my lip,
A beauty in each face I see,
And then the wicked shadows slip
Into life's joy and burden me.

Sometimes it rains and blows so cold
At every crevice round the door,
But hearth-joys fair our lives enfold,
And we are rich nor ask for more.

Who cannot see in darkest day
Some loveliness though skies are chill,
Has missed the path where angels stay,—
He slights the good and hunts the ill.

Who finds a rose and then looks close
To see the thorn that grows too near ;
Who smiles so hard, yet is morose,
He makes the dreary day more drear.

I love the summer skies, the morn,
When bird-songs wake the sleeping ear,
When clover-blooms the fields adorn,
And heaven seems Oh! so wondrous near.

But weather-bureaus are vile things
To make us cry or even laugh ;
If these could guage heart flutterings,
Our joy would not be whole nor half.

UNPARALLELED.

UNPARALLELED.

EYES so fair and wondrous grace
In every motion ; step so light
And kindest smiles all o'er her face,
And teeth so lily-white.

Speech so like the river's flow,
And glance of artless art ;
Pity for all, while cheeks aglow
Revealed the fawn-like heart.

Among the flowers her laughter sweet
Gave gentle challenge to the cry
Of birds : the food tossed near her feet
They caught nor made slight haste to fly.

Ready she was to stoop and trace
The grime and tears away
From some besaddened face
Which missed the wished-for play.

No coquetry nor long-laid plan
Was hers in things of love ; but just
An open soul where you could scan
Sweet purity and cautious trusts.

BEST THINGS.

BEST THINGS.

THE sob of the sea is sweet to me,
And the murmur of the sky blue lake ;
Its echoes live on, increase in degree
As I speed in the wide world's wake.

The moaning of winds among the pines
And the flutter of flags in the breeze ;
The sobbing of prayer while an arm entwines
The boy's neck as he pleads on his knees.

The bay of the hound as he scents the trail,
And the shout as it rings across the wood ;
The whistle and whirr of the delicate quail
As he flies from the place where he lately stood—

The touch of a sweet-heart's hand, her talk,
Her smile, her eyes of beautiful blue ;
Her step as light as a kitten's walk,
And her laughter of happiness too.

The jingle of coins when they are settled in
This pocket of mine with such large space ;
And slices of cake cut long and thin ;
A man with a heart all aglow, and the grace

BEST THINGS.

Of whose speech lingers on in my ear
And sets me astir—half aflame
Until I forget all traces of fear,
And struggle to climb and cut my name

In the scroll of those who loved, and died
For the world, who suffered and won renown
For noble deeds, oftimes defied
Base leisure, and stooped to win a crown.

But I like my mother, I guess the best,
And my sister Alice she comes next ;
Then the fields in wild flowers dressed ;
Last the preacher who murders his text.

A FACE.

A FACE.

Two eyes all merriment,
A mouth 'round which the grin
Went racing ; and glance swift sent,
On gentle mischief bent,
Opened a door for sin.

Kisses were poor enough
To print upon those lips ;
'They are sweeter with stuff
Bought from the shop-man gruff,
Which child hand tightly grips.

Roses are blooming there,
And curls are twining the ears ;
Fairer than painting most fair,
The treasure of mother's best care,
All mingled with patient fears.

From this that I now look on
Is to be the woman for love
Of someone when girl-hood is gone ;
And pure she must be as the dawn,
Fit for the future above.

SONG.

SONG.

O TOSSING, wild willow, thy nerveless unrest
Is soft as the touch of a snow-white hand ;
The zephyrs thy branches so lightly invest—
In mem'ries so sweet all enraptured I stand.

O evening, you turn me to dreaming awake!
O sunset that sobers and sinks as the star
Comes gleaming, you make my heart sadden and break
To go where my love and her flowers are.

O warble of sky-lark that circles and sings,
You start me from sighing and set me aglow
To sit at the feet of the maiden who brings
Such music of laughter and whispers so low.

O breath of the south land, how far do you fly?
You swing through her tresses and travel the lea ;
Do you steal the wild tear-drop that sits in her eye?
O what is the message she sends now to me?

ANOTHER LETTER.

ANOTHER LETTER.

TO-NIGHT a message is mine
From over the salt-sea waves
Where the myrtle sings and twining vine
Creeps over historic graves.

The sunset is golden, I hear,
In the fair Italian skies ;
No winter creeps into the year
And the sea-moan never dies.

The flowers and grapes are set
With colors dipped from the warm sun's rays;
St. Peter's tall turrets fret
In the heat, and feeble thought raise.

And pictures are hung so fair
From the masters of long ago ;
Bewildered life loses its care
As you live with Angelo.

And beauty is around so calm
In marble ; and mosaics rare
Are under your feet ; the balm
Of summer is everywhere.

ANOTHER LETTER.

I want to go, too, but yet I love
The sun-sets that sink down the lane,
And the rainbows so placid above
The trees set thrilling my brain.

Oh ! beauty is starred in the night
And strewn in the woods with the flowers ;
It lives in the swallows' flight,
And in the maple's high towers.

And it presses so near on the street
Where the children flock and laugh.
Where brothers and sisters meet
And increase their joys by half.

EVENING IN THE CITY.

EVENING IN THE CITY.

T'O-NIGHT is the last ere Sunday comes,
And the city is all awake ;
The street-car grinds and gloomily hums,
And the window shutters shake.

The locomotive shrieks,
And its bell clangs brassy notes ;
The drayman's wagon creaks,
And the north wind blows our coats.

The opera troupe is on the street,
And the small boy threads his way
Through the crowd; the dust is on his feet,
And the marbles are put away.

The tree-tops sigh and fret
And lunge in the growing gale ;
The band strikes a tune to get
More money from the ticket sale.

The peanut man gets hoarse
From shouting to quicken his trade ;
He'll give you good measure, of course—
“A nickel is all, don't be afraid.”

EVENING IN THE CITY.

The clatter of shoes is on the walk
And laughter is wide awake ;
The fakir begins his impromptu talk
Which makes the lazy sides shake.

The cab-man cracks his whip
And speeds on his way to meet the train
Where the drummer will come with heavy grip
And fee and jokes to stagger your brain.

LINES.

LINES.

THE pines moaned to me and swung
In the breath of the nearing spring,
The dead vines twisting clung
To the porch where the heavens flung
The drops of rain. The crumpled grass
Was matted and turned to gray,
And the blue-jay, king of his class,
Kept clattering away.

The winter-bird chirped and ate
The seed-pods and crumbs from the stones,
And fluttered away at a rate
So careless and defied with his tones
So cheery my near approach.
From the barn came the call of the cows,
And down the road wheeled the coach,
And the children played in the mows.

The dark clouds heavy crossed
The dome where their edges lay
In folds : in spots they tossed
Apart, and the sparing ray
Of the sun looked hopeful through.
The echoes of spring-time will soon
Be blent with the turtle's coo,
And the trees will dip in a fairer moon.

LINES.

The year has broken again
Its fetters of snow and ice,
And the hidden heart of men
Is watching for new device
Of mastery in the game
Which we put into life ;
The poet is building his fame,
And the lover is wooing a wife.

SPRING AGAIN !

SPRING AGAIN !

THE doves begin to coo and woo
Again, and the robin chirps as though
He had his mate and nothing to do
But warble and watch the river flow.

The sportsman is out again and waits
For the ducks that light on the river and float
Too near ; the fisherman longing baits
His hook and pulls the perch in the boat.

The farmer is knocking the corn-stalks down
And sowing the yearly field of oats,
And hauling his surplus grain to town,
And counting his wabbling shotes.

And bob-white is climbing the fence
And whistling with joy that winter's host
Is gone, and the waiters commence
To serve less quail on toast.

The thunder roars far along the sky
And startles the women and girls ;
The lightning-rod man is waiting to ply
His trade, and save from Jove's angry hurls.

Sweet spring time ! life bubbles again
In wood and on street, and hearts grow big
With gladness, and pessimism's men
Are softened and walk with a lighter jig.

AN EVENING HYMN.

AN EVENING HYMN.

THE sky is decked with wondrous gems
Of a wide-sweeping universe ;
The ardor of the day is done,
And distant from the bridge so terse
Is swept the locomotive blast.
The steps of 'lated labor glide
Across the lane so eager—fast
To reach the baby, and confide

The day's report of things to her
Whose love is still serene, aglow
With that high earnestness it kept
When they full twenty years ago
Knelt down, and prayed, and solemn gave
Their pledge before the world. High joys
Are these where passion sweet lives on
And kindlier arts each day employs.

The plaintive song of hope is passed
At random from the lips, and leaps
In awkward strains : so eager flows
The love which gains, and secret weeps
In anxious fear which no one knows.
The watch-dog speeds the wagon on
And whines and asks in snarling tones
For his fair share of unused things,
And eager grabs rejected bones.

AN EVENING HYMN.

The children prance the room and coo
And tussle wildly on the floor ;
The father roars and mother warns,
And into hope a prayer they pour.
Unseen alas ! the shadows flit
Across the future none can mark—
O Providence, thy hand hath sealed
The sunrise and the shadows dark.

O sunniest hours that fill our span !
O place of pain and parent cheer !
The early roof that slopes across
Where life began its dawning year.
O seat of sweetest mysteries
That twine the heart and press the tears !
Sweet home ! the jewel of the world
The comforter of gathering fears.

RHYME EVERYWHERE.

RHYME EVERYWHERE.

SWEET song is in the lifted dome
Of Peter's gilded church at Rome,
And breaks O, so much nearer home ;
And while it lives along Zermatt,
It echoes where the wood-man sat
Holding his ax which deftly hurls
The trees ; and rythm is in the curls
That wind the neck and toss about
Fair cheeks where roses red flush out.
It sobs along the ocean shore
Where waves pile high and madly roar
Across the sands, and crowd the shells
Far out upon the beach. Sweet bells
Swing soft in yon exalted tower—
It is the call of vesper hour ;
And hearts turn tender as the sun
Sinks fast from sight, while mixed rays run
Far out upon the arched sky,
And night looks forth with star-lit eye.
Sad verse lives on the pallid cheek,
On lips that curse or softly speak

RHYME EVERYWHERE.

Of love, and carry such a smile
While dimples double round the while.
High music sweeps among the stars
And echoes as the railway cars
Go pounding down the crooked track,
And carry you and me straight back
To lips we kissed but late, while tears
Came with each breath, and horrid fears
Lest parting there perchance no more
To meet again. In days of yore
Men sang of kings and set with these
The melody of rills and trees.
Avon's great bard loved humblest things,
And while he sweeps heroic strings
The moan of broken hearts is mixed
Where tragic deeds of war are fixed.
The brook leaps down the rocky steeps,
Tosses itself o'er stones, and creeps
Into the cool and restful pool,
Murmurs, and wins the boys from school,
And frets itself among the weeds,
Then darts so swift and steady leads
Out in the sun, and last is lost
In larger flow, and madly tossed
Into the lake, while here it moans
And mocks the dismal sea-sick groans.
The muse is dead ! but deathless song
Has soothed this weary world so long,

RHYME EVERYWHERE.

And in the change of loss and love
It lifts the bleeding heart above
The pain of grief: with faith it soars,
And into prayer it calmly pours
New trust and sweeter tenderness
As men look up and Deity confess.

A BEAUTIFUL KINDNESS.

A BEAUTIFUL KINDNESS.

HIS arms were long and his jaw was set—
I can see his eyes flash wildly yet
When just across the crowded street
A brutal cabman in his seat
Drove careless by and jostled hard
A gray haired lady only a yard
From the place where Rad calmly sent
Havana whiffs aloft. He bent
To set the ragged shawl aright,
Then roared: “That was a barbarous sight;
Because her dress is old and torn
And her youthful beauty all outworn,
That villain wanted to make a show—
It’s plain what men like him do know!
I had a mother; years ago
Her hair was white as Christmas snow
When last we parted; her tear-dimmed eyes
Are with me still, and the brightest skies
At noon somehow I always love—
Men folks forget how hard they shove
These tottering grand-ma-mas around.
I always count myself half bound
To watch them when I come to town—
I don’t wear fashion’s latest gown

A BEAUTIFUL KINDNESS.

Upon these arms, but they were trained
To take the soaking when it rained
At picnics where the crowd was thick :
It did not bother to turn a little sick
If I was sure it came because
I saved somebody. No, sir, applause
Was stale to me ; I wanted just
To know that every woman could trust
These hands if mishaps came.
You see I go a little lame—
I fought a brute so huge and wild
One time that tried to gore a child ;
She had no gift of gold, but stooped
And 'round my neck she sobbing looped
Her curls. I am coarse and rough, but I guess
The holy Christ can't fail to bless
Me for some things I did ; the pain
Was sharp, but there was no trace or stain
Of selfishness that I could see.
I rather think that we two agree
On some few points. You haven't said much,
But there is a smile, and a little touch
Of sadness in your patient face.
If you should see my mother, please chase
The sorrow from her brim-full heart—
Your train ? good by ! too bad to part."

MUSING.

MUSING.

I CAN'T express what is mine to-day
Of joy : sorrow itself is light,
And every drop, the trembling spray,
Is filled with beauty quite.

Rhymes are so feeble, too, in tone
To tell the ecstasy I feel ;
And as I sit and muse alone
The heart beats quick while memories steal.

What can I praise ? and need I ask
In such a wondrous world as this ?
See ! under every human mask
The God-like lives ; it is there I wis.

Old sadness, too, has somehow turned
Half sweetness, and the pain has merged
Into feeling so strange ; things spurned
One time I love, and life is purged.

Nothing is vile : it is so sweet
With chance to live for love's own sake.
No day wings past but that I meet
Some one who needs a good, firm shake

MUSING.

Of this hard hand of mine that picks
The flowers and baits the crooked hooks
For boys, and helps to do their tricks
And digs the secrets from their looks.

Were all the world to-night quite free
From enmity and barbed desire,
The kingdom of the Christ would be
On earth, and satan would retire.

THE GLORY OF WOMEN.

THE GLORY OF WOMEN.

“IN her long hair,” said stern St. Paul—
What was the measure of beauty then?
Was her loveliness in all
Its wonder summed up by early men
So lightly as that? It is, my George confesses,
Entrancing to look on waving tresses;
But what of the lips with delicate curve,
And teeth pearly white, and silky hands?
And who would leave out the artful swerve
In her motion? And what commands
Strong manhood more than an artless tone
Of tenderness? Leave us alone
Without their voices and charms so rare
And the earth would stop. But beauty is not
All grace; St. Paul, why over there
In the city are women forgot,
Who hold their husbands’ sterling hearts
With almost lack of beauty’s arts.
They never passed for belles in the days
Far swept in the past, but there was O, such
A purity and womanly ways
That made up for the lack so much
Of beauty that fades from the perfect face
When no heart is left to live in its place.

LINES.

LINES.

I CAN not tell, nor do I fret
Because 'tis so and will not change ;
The secrets of the soul are set
All tenderly and passing strange.
The dear recall of days swift sped
Is mine to make : they live again ;
The faces now so distant led
Return when soft I set my pen.

The sunshine ebbs across the hills,
The stars come scattering in the blue,
The joy of youth my own heart fills,
And broken hopes again renew.
And O, life's woof is knit with things
All wrapped in shadow, steeped in doubt—
Does that near bird which for me sings
Trill even half her music out ?

THE OLD — THE NEW.

THE OLD — THE NEW.

THE night winds sigh among the trees,
A sable cloud shuts out the sky ;
The hand of God is on the world—
To-night another year must die.

The priceless pearls of life drop off
Into the deep and silent sea ;
Nor sigh nor tear, nor wish nor hope
Avails to bring them back to me.

What is the year? to common thought
One link of life's fast growing chain ;
In bank accounts, in character,
A summing up of loss and gain.

Parental lips count one more span
Since wedded sorrows first begun ;
A little hand let loose its hold,
And found, please God, a warmer one.

The mists of time divide again
As sorrow turns to fairer skies ;
Touch the long record where you will,
A new hope lives an old one dies.

THE OLD — THE NEW.

Some list the music of yon bells
And linger o'er the ebbing past ;
The throbbing pulses start again
As bright dreams sweep that could not last.

If it were mine, what should I choose
As this great year steals swiftly on ?
Whence lure those chimes from lifting spires—
To future or to time that's gone ?

If memory could have her choice,
Reject the faintest weight of sin,
How glad the old year might go out,
How bright the new year would begin.

Unroll the long-drawn scroll and look—
What vice, what error left behind !
What burdens broken all the way
Racked body and compressed the mind !

The hunger fiend and blackest sins
Are in the open door-way still,
But every annual midnight chime
Exalts my faith in human skill.

The future in the past I see—
Ascent, a stairway in the dark—
The time long sung to all will come,
Each face will have the God-like mark.

THE OLD — THE NEW.

Who are recruits? who will meet hands
To speed the right, the world along?
The studied thought and fearless faith
Together prove a legion strong.

Peal on, O bells, I will not shrink
As echoes long forgot you wake;
Mine is a cheerful hope to-night,
New courage for the race I take.

THE POET.

THE POET.

HE must not be too proud to touch
The viler things of life—his strain
Should echo sweetly just as much
The longings of the poor, the pain

They feel and bear all lone unknown :
In these no recompense can be
Like that which falls from kingly throne ;
But thus he makes the world more free.

His soul should wild elate, o'erflow
With childish glee, and in his heart
The early loves must keep aglow
And sweeten all his later art.

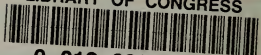
The sorrows of the world he claims ;
But while he seals with tears his rhyme,
He lifts the fallen, upward aims,
And sees approach the better time.

Oh, seer and prophet of the race !
Whose verses sweet so strangely flow ;
As aspiration moves apace
He sees beyond the creeds below.





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